

[BEGIN AUDIO]

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** Conducted on June 16 at 10:00 in the morning by the National Parks Service, American Memorial Park in cooperation with Marianas Cablevision. The subject is Guy Gabaldon, veteran of the Marianas Campaign. The interviewer is Daniel Martinez, historian for the USS Arizona Memorial in Hawaii. Good morning, Guy, how are you?

**GUY GABALDON:** Good morning, Dan.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** For the record, could you state your full name and middle name as well.

**GUY GABALDON:** Guy Gabaldon. I don't use a middle name.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** Never had one.

**GUY GABALDON:** I don't use it, no.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** Could you spell your last name for us?

**GUY GABALDON:** G-A-B-A-L-D-O-N.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** And where were you born?

**GUY GABALDON:** Los Angeles.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** And what was the date on that?

**GUY GABALDON:** March 22, 1926.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** And your parents' names?

**GUY GABALDON:** Pete and Amada [PH].

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** And how many brothers and sisters did you have?

**GUY GABALDON:** Well, I was raised by a Japanese family in Los Angeles, a foster family, and there were five us.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** Can you explain to me why you were raised by a foster family?

**GUY GABALDON:** I was more or less a waif in the streets of East Los Angeles in the bayous, and I was fascinated by the Japanese people, their customs and their

honesty and their diligence in anything they undertook. They were always A students and all, and I just naturally gravitated towards the Japanese, and the Nakanos family took me in, and I'm certainly glad of it. I learned quite a bit of their customs, their ways, their language.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** Were they there in East L.A., as well?

**GUY GABALDON:** Yeah.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** And how old were you when that happened?

**GUY GABALDON:** I was 10, and stayed with them until they were evacuated and sent to concentration camps when the war started.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** So that was in 1942 when they left.

**GUY GABALDON:** Right.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** What did your original parents think of all of that? Was this something –

**GUY GABALDON:** There was no conflict there. I was well taken care of by the Japanese family, and it turned out for the best.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** What was life like in Los Angeles when you were growing up?

**GUY GABALDON:** In the '30s, we were in a poverty era, but I didn't know that era, and everyone was alike, and financially. So I enjoyed it very much. Every summer we'd have a Model A Ford and maybe ten of us would jump in it, and go to Long Beach or Santa Monica, and start ditching school maybe in May when it start warming up, and go to the beaches, and it was a good life.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** Did you go to private school or public school?

**GUY GABALDON:** I went to a Catholic school for my first six years, and then I went to a public school.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** Where did you go to high school at?

**GUY GABALDON:** Los Angeles, Andrew Jackson High.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** And did you go with your foster brothers?

**GUY GABALDON:** To school?

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** Yeah, to school.

**GUY GABALDON:** Yeah.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** And you ran around with them.

**GUY GABALDON:** Yeah, certainly, we used to deliver Japanese language newspaper. It was *The Rafu Shimpo*, and I got to know just about every Japanese family, mostly in the East Los Angeles area.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** Did you pick up any of the Japanese language at all?

**GUY GABALDON:** Yeah, that's what I say I learned a lot of their customs, and basic Japanese. I wasn't fluent. It helped me later on in life.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** Your heritage is Mexican-American.

**GUY GABALDON:** Yeah, my people are from the State of New Mexico, the Albuquerque area. My mom was a post-mistress in Grants, New Mexico, and my grandfather on my dad's side was a Pony Express rider. He was also a teamster from Kansas City to Santa Fe. These were pioneer –

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** They worked along the Santa Fe Trail then, right?

**GUY GABALDON:** That's right. My people have been in what is now the United States for 480 years.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** Do you know where your first people landed, what did they do?

**GUY GABALDON:** There was a lieutenant, so I've been told. There's a Lieutenant Gabaldon is the correct pronunciation, and he settled in the Albuquerque area, and that was the start of the Gabaldon clan.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** He was a soldier, as I understand it –

**GUY GABALDON:** He was a lieutenant, yeah.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** I think what they call Conquistadores, right.

**GUY GABALDON:** That's right, right on.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** So the family starts in New Mexico, your family gravitates towards the California. That's an amazing experience that you were raised by Japanese American family –

**GUY GABALDON:** See, when the war broke out, there were less than 100 people, 100 Americans that knew the Japanese language, and I was one of them. And to have been of great help here on Saipan during the campaign, although I wasn't fluent, but with my basic knowledge, and then what I picked up here on Saipan, why it helped tremendously.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** Now, these were two minority people, the Japanese American being an Hispanic American or Mexican American, was Los Angeles tough on that or did you encounter some instances where there was prejudice?

**GUY GABALDON:** You mean racism?

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** Yes.

**GUY GABALDON:** No, East Los Angeles, in our neighborhood, there's Mexicans, Russians, Armenians, Japanese and we didn't know what racial prejudice was. There's a Jewish family, there's Saul and Max Factor, Pontrarduno [PH], and then an Ancano [PH], Japanese, and so no, there was no racisms, we didn't feel it.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** But how about when you left the neighborhood, did you ever encounter that or is it just something –

**GUY GABALDON:** Not in the Los Angeles area, no.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** Have you ever been back to the old neighborhood, wasn't that Boil Heights?

**GUY GABALDON:** Yeah, as a matter of fact, about four years ago, I bought an airplane in Monterey, California, and while they were getting the aircraft ready, I went down to Los Angeles, and saw my old neighborhood, and let me tell you, things have changed. I couldn't get out of there fast enough. It's a rough neighborhood to

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**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** Is your house still there that you lived in?

**GUY GABALDON:** Yeah, it's still there, and it was old back in the '30s, and so it looks kind of run down, but the neighborhood hasn't changed too much.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** Do you remember the address of that place or the street?

**GUY GABALDON:** It was on First Street, it was next to the Japanese hospital, the Miako [PH] Florist Shop was owned by the Nakanos family.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** What happened to the Nakanos family, do you ever keep in contact with them?

**GUY GABALDON:** Not recently, but they, like the rest of the American Japanese, were shipped off to –

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** Did they go to Manzanar?

**GUY GABALDON:** Part of them went to Manzanar, and then they went to Chicago. You see many of the Japanese were allowed to leave the concentration camps if they left the West Coast, and the Nakanos family went to Chicago, others went to different cities back east. Some went to Idaho to work the beets. I don't know how they pick them, but they were picking beets, and others were sent to Arizona to Park, Arizona. I think there was a concentration camp there.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** You use the term concentration camp, so –

**GUY GABALDON:** Purposely.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** The term that was used at the time was relocation center.

**GUY GABALDON:** That's right, yeah.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** You wanna elaborate a little on that for me? I suspect you have a pretty strong opinion about that.

**GUY GABALDON:** Well, yes, I do. If you're locked up against your will, and you're an American citizen, you're put behind barbed wire, how can that be called anything but a concentration camp? These were Americans. They were not Japanese. Incidentally, I'm married to a Japanese gal, and she was born in Mexico, and she says

the only time she realizes that she has Japanese blood is when she looks in the mirror, so they don't feel Japanese, you see. Yeah, I call them concentration camps, although they were called relocation centers back during the war.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** There was some controversy surrounding remuneration given to Japanese Americans. In many cases that never covered the losses of the business and homes –

**GUY GABALDON:** Twenty thousand dollars is what they got just a few years back. That couldn't possibly even start to cover losing their homes, their farms, their businesses. And the embarrassment of being herded like animals into buses and trucks, and shipped off to a concentration camp \$20,000, especially \$20,000 today couldn't start to cover it, no.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** A formal apology was issued by the congress to the Japanese American people, and so one Japanese American that was in a camp that the money to him wasn't the issue, but the apology in their culture, was what they were looking for.

**GUY GABALDON:** What do you mean by their culture, they're Americans.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** Right, culturally, he said, this is his words, that that was important to him that –

**GUY GABALDON:** Who apologized?

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** The American government apologized for incarcerating them.

**GUY GABALDON:** From the presidency?

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** Right on down. It was an Executive Order.

**GUY GABALDON:** I wasn't aware of the apology.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** Yeah, there was a formal apology that was given.

**GUY GABALDON:** Well, certainly an apology was due, but I think a lot more compensation was due –

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** Not just 20,000

**GUY GABALDON:** – reparations. Yeah, 200,000 would not be sufficient, but you know, the Japanese always carry their heads up high, no matter what. I'm talking about Japanese Americans, my people, my family. They never lowered their heads. They were proud people, and as I say, and I reiterate, they were and they are Americans. The most highly decorated outfit in the United States Army, World War II, was composed of Nisei, Japanese Americans.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** The 442 and 100<sup>th</sup> Battalion.

**GUY GABALDON:** That's right.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** Yeah, regimental combat team. I've interviewed some of those individuals –

**GUY GABALDON:** Is that right?

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** I know them in Hawaii, and you're right, they're very proud. They're very proud of their contributions. As a Hispanic American or Mexican American, and we talked about this briefly yesterday, you're very, very proud of being an American of that ancestry, and whether you know it or not, you've become a role model to a lot of Hispanic Americans because of your bravery, and because of what you did in the Marine Corps. Are you aware of that?

**GUY GABALDON:** No, I was not aware of that at all. And I don't feel anything, but American. What is an American? Hispanic, Japanese, Russian descent, Jewish, we are Americans first and foremost. As to you said, bravery, I don't feel that I've ever done anything that any other Marine would've done under the same circumstances.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** Well, that's I think, Guy, I think correct. The Marines here were extremely brave. I met many of them here, but there are people that show extraordinary bravery, and you have been cited for that. So I point that out as part of the historical fact, and being Hispanic American, Mexican American myself. When we studied World War II, we looked towards people of our background for heroes. And

you're one of those reluctant heroes that you'll never admit it, I think, and you've told me I'm not different than anybody else, but –

**GUY GABALDON:** You know, Dan, there were 4,000 heroes here, 4,000 young Marines for the most part in their teens that made the supreme sacrifice. They are heroes. I don't know what their racial background or ethnic background was. I don't care. They were killed here, and they are the heroes. Hey, I'm enjoying this. I'm enjoying life. I've always enjoyed life. Consequently, I feel that I should never be put in that category. I enjoyed what I did here on Saipan. That isn't to say that I enjoyed killing anyone. I killed 33 here. I was machine gunned here twice, and that is not enjoyable, but as an 18-year-old Marine, they tell me it's the first time in Marine Corps history that a private, I was a PFC at the time, worked freelance. I went over the hill the first day on the island, we landed June 15, 1944.

We came ashore about 9:00 a.m., and I went over the hill in the wrong direction. I went over the hill into Japanese territory, came back with a couple of prisoners, and my Commanding Officer, Captain John Schwabe said, "Hey, this is teamwork. Don't ever do that again." He says, "If you do, I'll court marshal you." And –

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** Well, let me just stop you for a moment. You didn't go over the hill to get out of action, you went over the hill to get into action. What prompted you to do that?

**GUY GABALDON:** That's what we were here for. We came to kill, we came to take Saipan. We did it, we took Saipan, we didn't negotiate it, and to do so, we had to wipe out almost every Japanese soldier, but we killed over 30,000. So I think the answer to your question is obvious, we came to take Saipan. The only way to take it was to kill, and so I went over the hill into Japanese territory. I say over the hill that's being facetious. I went that's all.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** You were assigned to what division and company then?



**GUY GABALDON:** I was in intelligence, regimental intelligence, 2<sup>nd</sup> Division, 2<sup>nd</sup> Marine, 2<sup>nd</sup> Division.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** What's the job description on that?

**GUY GABALDON:** My job was to be scout and observer. That was my classification.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** Some books have listed you as an interpreter.

**GUY GABALDON:** I was not an interpreter.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** That's wrong.

**GUY GABALDON:** Very wrong. I was a scout and observer, and after the campaign, I transferred from regimental intelligence to division intelligence. As a matter of fact, I don't think that my classification was changed then. I was shot then. This was seven months after D-Day I was machine gunned on Mount Tapochau, and I was sent back to the states, and I was sent to Camp Lejeune, North Carolina to teach Japanese. And that is when my classification was changed from scout and observer of the intelligence to interpreter. But here on Saipan, I was always called an interpreter, and I was referred to as an interpreter, but no, I was not officially an interpreter.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** So when you got back, and you got kind of admonished by your captain, I think you continued to do that. How did you finally convince him –

**GUY GABALDON:** Well, he says, as I told you, he says, "Don't you ever do that again." He says, "That's not the way we work," and so I says, "Yes, sir, okay." And that evening I loaded my pockets with ammunition with clips. I'd get the little boxes of 50 rounds and put 15 rounds in each clip, and loaded my pockets with them –

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** What kind of weapon were you carrying then/

**GUY GABALDON:** A Carbine, much to my regret. It's one of the worst weapons ever made. I was issued an M1, the Garand, which is a very good weapon. And the first dead Marine I saw with a Carbine, I threw my M1 away, and I grabbed his Carbine. They die-hard when you hit them with a Carbine. Any way, I went into

Japanese territory that night, and the next day I came back with about 50 prisoners. And Captain Schwabe, my commanding officer says, he says, “Well,” he says, “let the little jerk go. He’s getting results.” So after that I was on my own. I worked as I pleased throughout the island.

I’d go into Japanese territory, I’d come back with prisoners into whatever company or outfit happened to be there, whether it was a 2<sup>nd</sup> Division, 4<sup>th</sup> Division or even the 27<sup>th</sup> Army Division, and I’d give them my prisoners, and maybe catch a half hour sleep, and get some more ammo and back into Japanese territory. As I said, it was a fun thing. Never before had an 18-year-old private worked on his own, and I didn’t know, I didn’t care. That wasn’t the reason I was doing it. I was choosing where I wanted to fight, where I was gonna fight, how I was gonna fight. See, when we were coming to shore, I, like the rest of the Marines, felt kill all the dirty Japs, although I knew they weren’t monkeys hanging from the trees by the tail, as the Marines were told. And I think it takes somewhat of a hatred to build up that esprit de corps to get in there and kill, but my –

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** There’s people that have written about this, but they said in order to motivate people to be part of that process of killing, you dehumanize the enemy, you break them down to where they are less than human, is that fair?

**GUY GABALDON:** I think that’s the proper way to do it. If I form an army of a thousand men to take down to Nicaragua, to fight the Sandinistas, and I interviewed each and every person. I wanted to know mercenaries, and no one got paid for it, and these volunteers were very dedicated American anti-communist, and they hated the communist and communism, and therefore, a good group of men. I had men from the Air Force, the Army, pilots. Any way, getting back to the Saipan –

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** Well, you’re talking about this motivation, and that’s where you drop in the sand that your experience has been is that if you’re gonna go into

combat, you're gonna be in a situation, make sure that the men are motivated, and understand what they're doing.

**GUY GABALDON:** Absolutely. However, I didn't have that hatred, you see, being that I had lived with Japanese. And when I started capturing, I figured, you know, in a way, I was let down, Dan, because as a kid, I was told about the "Bakudan Sanyushi." This is three Japanese soldiers in Manchuria, when they were fighting in China that this Japanese unit was held up by barbed wire, and this is a whole mess of barbed wire along the line. So three soldiers carried a Bangalore Torpedo into this wire, blew themselves up, and as a consequence, their fellow soldiers were able to cross the lines, and win that particular battle.

And this always remained with me. I mean, the Japanese are diehard, good soldiers, and when I started capturing them, I was let down. I wanted the prisoners, but they'd talk. You'd take a Japanese prisoner, and you know, I'd ask him, "[JAPANESE LANGUAGE]," and say, "Any snipers in the area?" They'd tell me. I'd say what outfit you in and so on, and they'd give me all this information, and I was disappointed that the Japanese soldier was not living up to the Bushido Code, you see. But on the other hand, it was good information, it saved a lot of Marine lives.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** What would've happened to Guy Gabaldon, if the Japanese had captured you and they asked questions? What –

**GUY GABALDON:** Well, they'd kill immediately. There're many cases of torture, and two doctors were hanged in Guam after the campaign because they'd get pilots, who had been bombing say [INAUDIBLE] or wherever, and they'd cut them open, and with no anesthesia whatsoever, and take part and insert in their stomach, experimenting. And these pilots were screaming to beg them to kill them, and this is not hearsay, they were hanged. These doctors were hanged. There's another incident on Hiroshima, where they got a pilot and cut his liver out and they ate it. You hear things like that, and you say, "Oh, come on that's an exaggeration." Well,

they were also hanged, so that's no exaggeration, you see. There are a lot of cases of torture. We never tortured. I never tortured any of my prisoners. I killed, but never tortured. I was against that, and so you asked what would've happened if I'd been taken prisoner. I ended up a prisoner one time with the Japanese here on Saipan.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** How'd that happen?

**GUY GABALDON:** Well, I captured 800 in Marpi Point right where Banzai Cliff is and when I had the 800, I was milling around among the 800, who was a prisoner really, if I had talked to them into surrendering, and I'd point to the ships offshore. And I convinced them that they had no alternative, but to surrender or they'd be wiped out. These were survivors of the Bakudan Sanyushi, the suicide attack, which is the Guilcosai [PH] banzai attack at Tanopag Sanroki [PH].

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** Were there women and children also in this group or just soldiers?

**GUY GABALDON:** Some, mostly military and civilians of military aides. You see, the civilians pose as much threat as the military did here on Saipan. So I ended up with 800 prisoners, and every minute I was milling around among my prisoners. I was always thinking, all it would take is one guy to jump me –

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** To overpower you.

**GUY GABALDON:** Well, not so much overpower. One guy would set it off, you see. So who was the prisoner?

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** Let's just page back a little. Why did you decide to join the Marine Corps?

**GUY GABALDON:** I did not really. I was working in Alaska. I went when I was 16 years old, and always had a desire to join the Navy. I wanted to be a submariner, you know, young teenage kid has this wild dreams of glory in a submarine.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** Sixteen and you went to Alaska.

**GUY GABALDON:** Yeah.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** What did the Nakanos family think of that?

**GUY GABALDON:** Well, they were in a concentration camp.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** Oh, they were in the camp.

**GUY GABALDON:** Yeah, I went up in 1942 to Alaska, a great place.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** We'll get back to Alaska. How come you didn't go in the camp?

**GUY GABALDON:** Because I'm not Japanese. You had to be part Japanese. I wanted to. As a matter of fact, I wanted to go to Manzanar, and I was not allowed to go.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** There was a case of a married couple, they were an interracial marriage, they did go. But I was just wondering, in your experience, I mean, that must've broke your heart.

**GUY GABALDON:** Of course. First of all, I thought it was my government was doing the wrong thing, and sending my family away like that, but as to why did I join the Marine Corps, I came down from Alaska to join the Navy –

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** What were you doing in Alaska by the way?

**GUY GABALDON:** Everything. I went up there to work in a cannery in a place called Tyee, beautiful. It's on Baranof Island, and a big inlet there, and it's just so beautiful. It's all green, a lot of bear. The largest bear in the world are there, the brown bear, which are related to the Kodiak, and a great life. From there I worked at Juno, and then onto Sitka and Japonski Island. See, there's a manpower shortage back in 1942, and first of all, I couldn't get to Alaska with a construction outfit that I signed up with because I wasn't of age. So I got the bright idea of registering for the draft, and I did, and that gave me an ID card. It showed that I was 18 years old. And with that, I –

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** But actually you were 16.

**GUY GABALDON:** I was 16, yeah. And so with that, I applied for a job with a cannery in Seattle. They grabbed me. There's a manpower shortage, they'd grab anybody, and off I went. That's why I ended up in Alaska. A great country, great experience, but I came down to Los Angeles to join the Navy on my 17<sup>th</sup> birthday, and I had a perforated eardrum. I had done a lot of boxing when I was a kid, and –

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** Where down at the Main Street Gym or where/

**GUY GABALDON:** Yeah –

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** Art Arogon [PH] and all those people?

**GUY GABALDON:** Oh, way before Art Arogon. Oh, Art Arogon is after the war, as a matter of fact. But I was just a kid, I was shining shoes when I was 10 years old on Skid Row, and the Third and Main Street Gym is right on Skid Row, and I'd hang out there, and I became kind of a mascot of the fighter Ceferino Garcia, Jack Johnson. Jack Johnson had hands the size of a ham, great guy. Any way, he'd let me punch him as hard as I could, and so I boxed a little.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** Now, Jack Johnson was he black American?

**GUY GABALDON:** He was black, married a white gal, and that destroyed him.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** This was the –

**GUY GABALDON:** He went to France –

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** This was the man that was referred to in the film the Great White Hope.

**GUY GABALDON:** I didn't see it.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** Wonderful film, you should see it.

**GUY GABALDON:** I didn't see it.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** He's a modern hero to black Americans, Jack Johnson and you knew him. He was a terrific fighter.

**GUY GABALDON:** He was the world's greatest. I think he and Joe Lewis, no one will ever meet their abilities.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** You say he had big hands.

**GUY GABALDON:** Oh, enormous. He was a giant of a man.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** He was what, 6'4", 6'5"?

**GUY GABALDON:** I think he was about 8 feet tall. [LAUGHTER]

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** And you'd be down there, and you'd –

**GUY GABALDON:** I used to beat him up.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** Beat him up.

**GUY GABALDON:** Well, I was 10 years old.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** I know what it was like when I was 10 years old in Los Angeles, and going around, and I had my adventures, but I don't think they're unequaled. Where did you get all this independence, Guy, to do these things?

**GUY GABALDON:** I don't know I think we're born individuals, and we're born the way we are. I believe that more and more everyday. I think we're born with a certain personality, and it's lived out all your life. I thought it was only normal for a 12-year-old kid to hop a freight train and go to Las Vegas. I didn't know that it wasn't the ordinary thing to do.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** And Skid Row that's a rough section of Los Angeles. You had a lot of street smarts.

**GUY GABALDON:** I hate to see a 12-year-old kid, 10-year-old kid on Skid Row today.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** I've got the sneaky suspicion –

**GUY GABALDON:** I don't know today a bunch of weirdoes around. Back then, there was no problem. I look back, and there are wonderful memories. Skid Row, I'd go in the bars and shine shoes, you see. I made a little wooden shoeshine box with a leather strip, and I'd hop on the streetcars. They called them trolleys back east, I guess. And Los Angeles had streetcars all over the city at that time.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** They had the big red cars too.

**GUY GABALDON:** The red cars were something else. Red cars went from Downtown Los Angeles to Long Beach, I remember. No, the streetcars were local, and they had cow catchers, and as they went in one direction, that cow catcher would be down, and when they'd come back, they'd lift that one up, and the other end had it's cow catchers. So when it was raised, I'd run behind it, and jump on the cowcatcher, catch my ride all the way to town.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** What did the conductors think about that?

**GUY GABALDON:** Every now and then, they'd stop the car and run back and kick me off, and it was kind of a game because when he'd get back on, I'd jump on the cow catcher again, and go downtown, and that's where I'd apply my trade. I was quite a capitalist. I was business for myself.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** What was a shoeshine worth in those days?

**GUY GABALDON:** Ten cents. You play it by ear, it was worth whatever you could get. The bartenders would let me go in these big bars on Main Street, and although it was a depression, you'd always get some hillbilly to come in trying to put on a dog and show the B girls that he had a lot of money, and so he'd call the shoeshine boy over, and I'd get maybe a five-cent tip, and it was quite a life. I got to see the life as very few other 10-year-old kids can see it.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** I would say so. Now, for those listening to the interview, the term B-girl, I think has dropped out of our vernacular, what was a B-girl?

**GUY GABALDON:** Oh, it has, I didn't know that. [INDISCERNABLE] working the bars, sit with a guy, and play him for all they can, and buy him drinks, usually a Coke for a tremendous price.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** Which still goes on today.

**GUY GABALDON:** Yeah, I didn't know the term B-girl had died. I don't go to bars, but –

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** No, you only went when you were young, right.



**GUY GABALDON:** When I was 10 years old.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** Well, were you living with the Nakanos family then or was this before?

**GUY GABALDON:** I lived with the Nakanos family, and with the Una [PH] family, there were several families, Kakar Mochinata [PH], these were close buddies of mine. Kakar and I were about the same age, and –

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** Did you have a little gang, a group of guys you hang around with?

**GUY GABALDON:** They weren't gangs as you know them today. Gang today is a dirty word.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** No, I'm thinking of the more positive like a –

**GUY GABALDON:** Yeah, we had our group, and it consisted of Saul and Max Factor and Max Factor, the same name as the movie, Cosmetic Man. Later, during the war, he lost an eye, he joined the Navy. And there was Harry Marsh [PH], and the Nakanos brothers, myself. It was people of all races, just kids, and no gang.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** Sort of like a little Our Gang in the more positive sense.

**GUY GABALDON:** There were no guns, there was no narcotics, no drugs back then. And our fights were just, you know, you beat a guy up, you stand up, shake his hand, and yeah, that was it.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** Let bygones be bygones.

**GUY GABALDON:** Yeah.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** That must've been a great experience too to run around with –

**GUY GABALDON:** Oh, it was fun.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** What would you guys do? I mean, would go all over the town, maybe go down –

**GUY GABALDON:** Yeah, we were, I guess, as a matter of fact, the Japanese mothers would call us yogaday [PH]. Yogaday is a tramp, a bum, quit being a yogaday.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** Did you ever go to Alvares [PH] Street or anything like that, and go down and have tacos?

**GUY GABALDON:** We went all over. Alvares wasn't quite the street then as it is today.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** Yeah, more touristy today.

**GUY GABALDON:** Yeah, now there's a bunch of stalls, there are taco and burritos and so on. We hit the old places there like Felipes [PH]. It was there then, and that was back in the '30s.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** The world's best French dip.

**GUY GABALDON:** Yeah, the French dip, and Vickie's was the original burrito on East [INDISCERNABLE] Street. And we'd have matzo balls that the Factors would come up with, and –

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** How about Little Tokyo, did you go down there and get –

**GUY GABALDON:** Always, we used to get sushi. I think it was about 50 cents a box, a big box like that –

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** You could feed a lot of guys like that.

**GUY GABALDON:** Oh, boy, yeah. But the rest of America didn't know anything about sushi. It was just we, the Nisei [PH], and we enjoyed it. So we had a taste of all kinds of foods, Russian. I married a Russian. We were married for 19 years. She's passed away, and so I had my share of borscht, and borscht coming out of my ears, and I learned to speak a little Russian while I was at it. So we were a mixture of all types and ethnic backgrounds.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** You joined the Marine Corps in what year?

**GUY GABALDON:** On my birthday, March 22, 1943.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** You were 17?

**GUY GABALDON:** Seventeen.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** Did anybody have to sign you in?

**GUY GABALDON:** Yeah, I got my big sister to come in and sign me.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** Which big sister was this?

**GUY GABALDON:** Well, this was from my real family.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** Your real family. But you refer to the Japanese, the Nakanos family, as your family, that's interesting.

**GUY GABALDON:** Yeah, wonderful people. I'm so indebted to them, moral people. I learned a lot of good things from them, and I also learned many good things from my real family.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** Some of us are lucky to have one family. You were lucky, you had many families, it sounds like.

**GUY GABALDON:** I did, yeah. As you say, I was just bumming around. I had that independence, and I loved what I was doing.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** Well, you still do. My experience with you has been this person that just loves life. You really love it to the fullest.

**GUY GABALDON:** Well, while I'm still young, might as well enjoy it.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** How young are you right now?

**GUY GABALDON:** Sixty-eight.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** You joined the Marine Corps in 1942. Why did you choose the Marines?

**GUY GABALDON:** 1943.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** '43.

**GUY GABALDON:** I was gonna join the Navy [INDISCERNABLE] eardrums, so naturally, they turned me down. And I was gonna go back to Alaska, and then it was suggested I try the Marines, and they also were turning me down because the Marine Corps has no doctors of its own, there are Navy doctors, and I was turned down. And I says, "Well, I speak Japanese." And wow, they grabbed me, and that was it. And I

didn't speak that much Japanese. Even my Nisei brothers did not speak that much Japanese. I knew basic, few words.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** You wanted in the Corps.

**GUY GABALDON:** Well, you met Bob Cheeks [PH]. You interviewed Bob Cheeks, I believe. Bob Cheeks was a lieutenant here on Saipan when I was a PFC, and the rest of the interpreters had come out with little booklets, raise your hands and I'll give you food and water and so on. I memorized this, you see. I was not an interpreter. In fact, I was turned down after I joined the Marine Corps or rather they accepted me because they believed I spoke Japanese fluently, and ended up with the 2<sup>nd</sup> Marine Division in Hawaii on the Big Island. And I was interviewed by a Captain Borgman [PH], I believe.

He was one of the language officers, and he says, "You don't know enough Japanese." So I was sent back to Regimental Intelligence that's what I say I was a scout and observer. When I landed here, I was a scout and observer. And here, I learned a few phrases from the books that Cheeks and a few other officers had written, and that got me through. And then having this background, it was a natural, it was something that perhaps I'd heard as a child. My daughter, our youngest daughter is an island girl. She's been here all her life. And my wife and I speak Spanish, my wife is Japanese, born in Mexico, and we speak Spanish. And my daughter's never spoken Spanish, but every now and then, when we [INDISCERNABLE], my wife and I, my daughter understands it. So it's a natural whether you speak it or not, you see. And the Japanese came to me in that manner.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** What was basic training like for you?

**GUY GABALDON:** We called it boot camp. Basic training's in the Army.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** That's right, I apologize.

**GUY GABALDON:** There again I'm being facetious.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** I know how you Marines are, you're protective. Boot camp, they call it boot, as I remember, what was that like for you?

**GUY GABALDON:** I loved it. I like discipline.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** Why do you like discipline?

**GUY GABALDON:** Go back to we're born with a certain personality, and I really believe this, and when I was a young kid, I'd read about the Loss Patrol. That was my favorite movie, the Loss Patrol –

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** World War I film.

**GUY GABALDON:** No, I don't think it had anything to do with World War I. Wallace Berry, I believe, way back, they're in the Sahara Desert, the French Foreign Legion, so I don't think it had anything to do with –

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** No, I was thinking of the Fighting 69<sup>th</sup>, go ahead though.

**GUY GABALDON:** Any way, these things, I think, really molded me, my way of thinking.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** So Hollywood kind of influenced this –

**GUY GABALDON:** Yeah, and regrettably, today it's influencing kids in the wrong direction. And any way, this is what brought me to capture and kill here.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** So you had this vision of what it was gonna be like, this Hollywood vision. Of course, it's much different when you get in the field and such, but you join the Marine Corps, you like the discipline, and did you like your drill instructor? Do you remember his name, wasn't Wood –

**GUY GABALDON:** I've got it written down. As a matter of fact, it's in my book. I had to do a little background research to get his name, so I have forgotten. We had two drill sergeants. One is the drill sergeant, and there's a corporal, his assistant, and I liked the drill sergeant. He was tough, but he was the John Wayne type of Marine, tall and never smiled. He was a bulldog.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** Didn't he growl at you once and a while?

**GUY GABALDON:** I don't think he could speak that's all he could was growl. Back then, the discipline was so tough that when the drill sergeant stood in your tent and said, "You're a little SOB," you'd say, "Yes, sir." Today, they say that, you write home to momma, she gets a hold of your congressman, and very soon that drill sergeant is fired. And I think we need that discipline, I think we need that toughness, and work them, work them hard from say 5:00 in the morning until 10:00 at night, and back then, boot camp was only seven weeks. I mean, they had to grind them out, send them out here to –

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** Getting them ready for the toughest war ever fought.

**GUY GABALDON:** Now, I think it's a little longer, but boot camp, I look back at boot camp as something that was absolutely necessary to mold any Marine.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** Now, you would probably stick out in a company of Marines, I suspect.

**GUY GABALDON:** I certainly did. I was 5'4", and everybody else was 6' tall, if that's what you mean.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** Did the drill instructor from time to time use you as a lesson of discipline?

**GUY GABALDON:** You read my book.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** Well, I read a few things about it.

**GUY GABALDON:** Yeah, when we first went to boot camp, we were lined up, we have to turn in our civvies, and we're being issued our Marine clothes, our GI clothes, and we're all standing there naked, big room, and it must've been, oh, I don't know, 50 or more guys in there, and as I go down this counter, they hand you a T-shirt and socks and so on and shorts. And these are the big boxer shorts that I always wore, the tight Jockey shorts, and any way, grabbed the stuff, and you put your swimming clothes in a bag, and you start putting your GI clothes on. And the shorts they gave me, I think they were made for Jack Johnson. I stood there, they were hanging down

below my knees, and everybody got the biggest charge out of that, and I'm just standing there, yeah, I was a young kid holding them up, so yeah, I was –

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** Did you ever get [INDISCERNABLE] –

**GUY GABALDON:** Yeah, yeah, certainly, that was done purposely.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** When you were at boot camp, of course, the sergeants could get your attention, and when you're lined up in formation, they might come up to Private Guy Gabaldon, and get your attention a variety of ways. What was some of the ways that a drill instructor gets your attention?

**GUY GABALDON:** Well, I think they'd take your TV license away, if I was to tell you what they said, but they let you know that you were out of step, so to speak, and it was discipline, just plain, ordinary discipline, no, not so ordinary. It was discipline.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** But they'd occasionally shake you and give you a good pat on the rump, if you needed it, right?

**GUY GABALDON:** The threat was there, which didn't mean anything. I mean, go ahead take –

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** For people listening to this, Guy, that are outside the military, sometimes they don't understand why this is all done. What's the purpose of that? What is the drill instructor trying to get across when he might rough you up or shout at you? What's the whole purpose of that?

**GUY GABALDON:** Discipline. You know, I believe more when I was a teenager, a teenaged Marine that when that sergeant says, "Take that hill," you take that hill, and you may die in doing it, but you don't question it. You take that hill, and this is what it takes. There's no let's take a vote on it, no way. You get up there, you do as I say. I still believe that this is necessary. I say give me 50 Marines, good, dedicated Marines, and what did Lenin say, "Give me a handful of dedicated men, I'll conquer the world," and that's the way I feel about the Marine Corps, dedicated Marines that

are willing to give their lives for God and country and the Marine Corps. And you can't lose, no way you can lose.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** You have very strong feelings about the Marine Corps, you have a lot of pride about them.

**GUY GABALDON:** I love the Corps, yeah.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** What do you think of today's young Marines? Yesterday, I saw you looking at those [INDISCERNABLE]. I couldn't help but feel, and maybe I got the wrong impression, you had tremendous admiration for them as well.

**GUY GABALDON:** Yeah, you're very observant. I didn't know you were doing this, but yeah, I was looking them over, and they looked like pretty good material. I think they're as tough as any Marine has ever been, and I don't know what the discipline is in the Corps today. I was talking to General Rawlings [PH] yesterday morning, and I admire him. I think he's an enlisted man's Marine, an enlisted man's general, and I like that. I think the Marine Corps is in good shape today.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** An enlisted man's general, what's your definition of that?

**GUY GABALDON:** You can talk to him, he's down to earth.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** Approachable.

**GUY GABALDON:** Approachable, yeah. And he speaks the enlisted man's lingo. I was very impressed with Rawlings.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** That's great. When you got out of boot camp, and where did they send you next?

**GUY GABALDON:** Went to Camp Elliott, which doesn't exist any more, and I told them in boot camp that I spoke some Japanese, so I was assigned to Japanese language school in Camp Elliott, and I was there for a week or so, and Los Angeles was off limits then because the Zoot Suit War in Los Angeles.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** Explain that.



**GUY GABALDON:** Well, there was a group they called Zoot Suit because they wore these ankle choker pants and their dressed.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** Broad brimmed hats, and chains, long block chains –

**GUY GABALDON:** A long chain.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** They were Chicanos, right? They were Mexican Americans?

**GUY GABALDON:** For the most part, yeah. Yeah, they were Chicanos, and so it was off limits to the Marines, and I said, “Well, what the hell, I mean, that’s my home. I’m gonna go to L.A. off limits or not.” And I’d go to L.A. –

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** Because there’d been clashes between the military and the –

**GUY GABALDON:** The story goes that the Zoot Suits were jumping the uniformed be they sailors or Marines. I never heard of any Army boys being jumped, but this turned out to be a big fat lie. A lot of sailors would come in, and there was this rumor that the Zoot Suits were jumping the sailors and Marines, and I know of incidents where the sailors and Marines had jumped the Zoot Suits, and the bad part about this was a lot of these Zoot Suits had been wounded overseas, and they’d come back, and they weren’t wearing the uniform any more. They were wearing clothes, leisure clothes that they liked. And so uniformed men jumping on guys that had been wounded overseas, isn’t that horrible?

Any way, it was off limits, and I went to L.A. this one time, and I got in a fight with a Zoot Suit and got my jaw broken. I didn’t realize it was broken, it was dangling on my chest, and I was fighting, and I realized I couldn’t close my mouth, so I grabbed this guy, and we went down. I banged his head on the concrete, and then an ambulance from the Navy Hospital in Long Beach was called in. They picked up and took me to Long Beach Naval Hospital. I was there for two months, good duty, beautiful duty. I got to home every evening, and they wired my jaw shut. Then when I finally was sent back to Camp Elliott, I reported to the language school, and found out that I’d been thrown out of it. I was no longer in Japanese language school. I was

sent to 81-millimeter motor, which I weighed 126 pounds, and my job was to carry that big base plate. I could barely pick that thing up.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** How much did that weigh?

**GUY GABALDON:** About 500 pounds. I don't know. It was pretty heavy, but any way, from there, I was sent to Camp Pendleton, joined a replacement group, and send to Hawaii to the Big Island, and joined the 2<sup>nd</sup> Marine Division, which was then at Camp Tarawa, Kamuela, and from there, we came to Saipan.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** Was that your first time into the Pacific?

**GUY GABALDON:** Yeah.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** What did you think of Hawaii?

**GUY GABALDON:** I liked the Big Island. Yeah, I still like it. I just flew my plane over here, a couple of years ago, from California. I ferried it from Saipan, and I stopped at Hilo. Did California to Hilo, Hilo to Majaro, Majaro to Saipan. And I stopped at Hilo, and stayed there overnight, and it's still laid back, it's still –

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** It's a nice little town.

**GUY GABALDON:** Nice town, it brought back a lot of memories. The first time I'd been there since the war. This is about three years ago thereabouts.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** Then they staged you there, and what was your first campaign you were involved in?

**GUY GABALDON:** Saipan.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** And did you leave from Hilo or did you go to Pearl Harbor and board a ship there?

**GUY GABALDON:** We went from Camp Tarawa to Hilo. We boarded a ship there, and went to Maui for maneuvers, and then from Maui, we went to Pearl. And they moved us from Pearl to the Aloha Tower, and we were at the Aloha Tower when there was a big explosion. They say there were LSTs, I think six LSTs exploded right where we had been docked in Pearl.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** May 21, 1944.

**GUY GABALDON:** You got a good memory.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** Six were lost, you're right.

**GUY GABALDON:** I'm always right. From there we went to Enimetau [PH], we were coming to Saipan, and I was amazed at the size of that lagoon. It seemed that there's hundreds of ships in Enimetau [PH] Lagoon. We rendezvoused at Enimetau. We were coming to Saipan, and I was amazed at the size of that lagoon. It seemed that there's hundreds of ships in Enimetau Lagoon. We rendezvoused there, I believe, the 2<sup>nd</sup> and the 4<sup>th</sup> Division, and I was reading later that troops were coming from all the way from the South Pacific coming this way to join us, and then we came and hit Saipan on June 15.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** What was the naval bombardment like that morning?

**GUY GABALDON:** The night before, the 14<sup>th</sup>, before we landed, it went on all night long. It just lit the skies. We had several wagons here, battlewagons, and then cruisers and all. And you know, you mentioned the bombardment, the shelling, when we hit the beach, we dug in, had our fox holes where Joe 10 is now, all the way from Joe 10 to –

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** What beach was that Blue?

**GUY GABALDON:** The Red 1, 2 and 3. And we dug in there, and I'll never forget this one ship, it must've been a battlewagon, three shells would be fired at one time, it was a barrage, you'd see the flash from the ship. And then as the shells came overhead, you'd hear boom, boom, boom, and as they went back and hit the mountain, you'd hear the three explosions again. And this went on all night long, never let up, and I wondered where do they keep all that ammunition. To this day, I just can't visualize all that ammo in one ship, and they were big, 16 inchers.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** You must've watched this aboard ship. You probably felt who could live through this?

**GUY GABALDON:** Aboard ship, no, this is shelling. This barrage was we were on the beach.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** Oh, when you were on the beach.

**GUY GABALDON:** Yeah, we were already dug in. It was that night, D-Day night and D-plus one night.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** There had been a pre-bombardment, and one of the guys said to me, he says, “You know, I don’t know how anybody could live through that, but they” –

**GUY GABALDON:** Yeah, and it doesn’t kill. The shelling does not kill. Certainly, there’s bodies all over the island, but I don’t know if they amounted to 1 percent over the 30-something thousand Japanese were here. But those bodies, aboard ship, just the other side of the reef, you could smell a sweet stench, sickening, putrid stench, and as we came ashore in the alligators, it took the alligators to get over the reef. The LCVPs could not come over the reef, naturally. And as we came ashore, the stench became more pronounced, and after that it was for a whole month, and increased in strength.

The shelling and the strafing and the bombing was taking place three or four days before we landed. So consequently, there was bodies all over the island, and no one buried them. Naturally, the Americans weren’t here, even when we did land, we buried our own. We certainly didn’t bury Japanese. And they were rotting. In this hot, tropical, humid weather, it didn’t take long for the stomachs would bloat, they’d burst, and then you’d see the maggots in their eyes, and throughout their bodies, wherever there was any wounds, and this is what gave off that putrid stench.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** The Hollywood movies depicted, and you may see something graphic portrayed in violence of a death of someone, but there’s no way to show the other sense of smell because other people said it was just unbelievable.

**GUY GABALDON:** Yeah, Hollywood naturally can't. They made a movie of my life, Hell to Eternity, and I think you could see the resemblance in Jeffrey Hunter and myself, he portrays me. He's blonde and blue-eyed, and stands 6'2", but in one scene there, they decapitate a buddy of mine, the Japanese, and David Jansen portrays that buddy of mine –

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** Did that actually happen?

**GUY GABALDON:** Well, we tried to get David Jansen to really do it, and he objected.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** No, I mean, did the incident actually happen.

**GUY GABALDON:** Yeah, there were a lot of decapitations. That incident was symbolic of many incidents such as that.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** But it didn't actually happen to your friend that way.

**GUY GABALDON:** No, no, not in that manner, no. There were other friends that were killed. One Walcott [PH], by coincidence, it was Walcott and Walshaw [PH], both from Albuquerque, New Mexico. Walshaw, he didn't get to get into much of the fight. Right on the beach, as we landed, one leg was blown off, later the other one was amputated, and a horrible sight, as he'd lift that stump up, and the flesh was hanging, and the bone protruding. And he hollered, "Kill the bastards," and Walshaw's long gone now, but we did it, we killed the bastards.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** One of the things that a lot of people when they read about war, and I've read so much, and there's no way that I'll ever be able to experience what you experienced, there's no way. And so we rely upon you that witnessed it, but when your friends that you know get injured or killed or wounded, how did that affect you personally?

**GUY GABALDON:** I've been asked that many times. It left no last [INDISCERNABLE]. The only thing that I look back on that did leave an affect is the women tossing their babies off the cliffs, and being that I spoke Japanese, I got to talk to these women, and I'd tell them, "[JAPANESE LANGUAGE]." I'd tell them, "Believe

me, we'll not harm or kill your children. Don't do it," and this one in particular, she looked at me, and tossed her baby off, and then she jumped. And you know, Dan, the sorry part of this is that the cliffs aren't that high, and when they hit down there, they would often times just break their bones, they would not immediately die, and so many occasions where women would be reaching out for their babies, and could not move with broken legs, broken back.

And I saw many Marines with tears. We couldn't get down there for another day or two. There's nothing we could do to help them. I hesitate to say this, but I saw Marines shoot some of these people that were just all busted up, and they would be dying within a matter of hours, blood was just pouring out, and they'd be laying there moaning and groaning. Maybe that's playing God, I don't know, but I don't feel that wrong was done by killing some of these people, although my religious beliefs says that only God can take the life. Naturally, shooting a soldier shooting at you is something else, but these are women and children, babies. In my movie, it shows this woman that was [INDISCERNABLE]. It doesn't take from the truth. The mother killed her child and the mother jumped and killed herself. There were many of them, but this one incident –

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** Did you ever flashback, though, to your family, when you were out here in the Pacific thinking about them?

**GUY GABALDON:** I thought about them, but it wouldn't break me up in any way. Certainly, I thought of them.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** I went out to those cliffs, and –

**GUY GABALDON:** You know where the monuments are? Forgive me for interrupting you, where the monuments are today, that's not where they jumped off, and beautiful site.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** Where did they jump off?

**GUY GABALDON:** Just south of there, maybe 100 yards. There's a shelf down below the rocks. You can jump off right now where the monuments are and swim away. As a matter of fact, Orococke [PH] did that, who is now a very good friend of mine. He jumped off. That's how he saved his life. He jumped off and dove down and swam back into the caves.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** Orococke, who is this gentleman?

**GUY GABALDON:** Oh, what a story.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** Well, let's just digress to that story in a minute. I went down south of it where the ground turns, and you can look back up towards where the monuments are, and from my memory of looking at photographs that area it's not that high, and there's a shelf down below is that the place?

**GUY GABALDON:** Yeah, where the shelf is. That's where they'd hit, and that's where they'd break their bone and break their bodies. But right where the monuments are, the big monuments, you can dive off of there.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** Right, I saw some rocks down below, but I tried to think that my memory was that they hit rocks down below, and there didn't appear to be that description there. There was some big rocks that are there, but unless they hurled themselves, there was no way to hit the rocks. They would hit the sea.

**GUY GABALDON:** But you know, now that we're on that, the monuments there, you know, we're all so proud of what took place yesterday, the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, the monument and all, but you know, I still hang my head in shame. Fifty years went by, Dan, without one monument in honor of the 4,000 young Americans that died here, in honor of the veterans who returned yesterday, nothing, a little plaque, little 18-inch plaque maybe here or there hidden in the bush someplace. And the Japanese with their beautiful, enormous, big, ornate monuments, hey, what a shame that these 4,000 were forgotten by Washington. And naturally, the average American knows

nothing of it. He wasn't apprised of it, so I blame my country, my government, my nation for –

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** For the neglect?

**GUY GABALDON:** For the neglect, and for not informing the average American.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** Is it because Saipan is so remote from the United States. For instance, if this battle had taken place maybe in Hawaii or somewhere, what's your view?

**GUY GABALDON:** Well, I never thought of that, but who cares? I don't care if they died on the moon. They were 4,000, the cream of our youth gave their lives here, so you and I can be sitting here today, here on Saipan. And otherwise, we'd all either be dead or slaves, if Japan had won the war. These kids died for that, and they died willingly. I mean, no one wants to die, but they knew when they came out here that they might be given their lives for this, and not a monument until yesterday. So I can't be all that happy about what we had yesterday. Certainly, I'm glad that it's there, and I'm glad that finally someone has done something. There has been a lot of effort has gone into this.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** I watched you yesterday, and I looked at you, and it seemed to me as you were taking in the ceremonies, it seemed a little bittersweet.

**GUY GABALDON:** That's right, good description.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** Where other people's eyes were aglow, yours was one of resigned satisfaction is that a correct –

**GUY GABALDON:** How observant you are. I had no idea that anyone would see that.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** I watched that and it took me back a little, and I wanted to talk to you about it today. What in your view needs to be done from this point on? Where do we go from here, in regards to Saipan and American Memorial Park?

**GUY GABALDON:** It's been done. Now, yesterday it was done.



**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** Does the museum need to be built now?

**GUY GABALDON:** The museum, we have a small museum there. I think we should have many more artifacts donated. They're scattered all over. They're in museums in the states, individuals. I have a machine gun at home, I'll be donating to the museum, and we need a lot of this. We need photographs during the campaign. You know, one Japanese I killed had a camera, and as I say, I was kid 18 years old, and I grabbed this camera, and Intelligence D2 gave me all the film I wanted, so I took a lot [INDISCERNABLE]. I've got many of them at home, and I'd have pictures taken of me with this camera.

And one photographer, division photographer says, "Hey, this is a Carl Zeiss lens." I said, "What's that?" I had no idea. He says, "This is a good little camera." So I got a bunch of pictures –

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** Do you still have the camera?

**GUY GABALDON:** No, you know what, oh, boy, I had no idea the worth of that camera. Even during the campaign, as we were going north, ships would come into what is now Charlie Dock, and unload supplies, submarine tenders were there. And I'd go aboard, and I'd take a saber or a flag or a pistol, I'd taken off a Japanese I'd killed, and I'd go aboard, and they'd give me fried chicken, ice cream and pie. This was during the campaign, and I traded my camera there for a bottle of booze, and I don't drink, I've never been a boozier, but I was gonna be a good guy with the boys. But what was that Water, Fill and Frasier or Water, Hill and Frasier, whatever, I do remember that, and I traded the camera for that, and I've been kicking myself ever since.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** Wow, that'd be a terrific artifact to have now.

**GUY GABALDON:** Oh, boy, yes, it would.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** But to get back to our point, what in your view, needs to be done from this point on? The memory of those men is something that –

**GUY GABALDON:** Start all over, let's go to war with Japan.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** Well, seriously, what do you think needs to be done?

**GUY GABALDON:** Well, you know, you hit upon something good there, the museum. What else can be done to the memorial there? They're gonna inscribe the names of the 4,000, that's great. I've got the names, I've compiled the names.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** Some of the Marines suggested that there needs to be more a community support for the American Memorial Park that people need to get involved. For instance, the fellows that are running the museum, they're now heavily committed and involved to provide a first-class museum for the park. Is that the kind of thing that you envision or do you envision something else?

**GUY GABALDON:** I don't think we're gonna get that type of support. I don't think at this particular time, I should go into that. I think it'll be detrimental to the cause for me to expose what has happened and what will not [INDISCERNABLE], but we won't get the support that we should have. I will say this, that monument, American Memorial Park thing, has become such a political thing that's why you say you saw a little something in my face that showed a little bitterness yesterday. This was not done with all volunteer work. There was some big money paid to some people to do this, and that to me is wrong, is wrong to buy an American to help construct a memorial for 4,000 young kids that died. I can go much deeper into this, but I don't think it behooves you or the cause for me to go any further into this right now.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** So it's obvious you have some strong feelings in this area, and the cause for you is the memory of those 4,000 men.

**GUY GABALDON:** That's right, 50 years went by before they were recognized, 4,000 young kids. And I keep emphasizing the 4,000, hey, that's a lot of blood, Dan. I saw this one kid, another teenager, about my age by a bunker where the train is, the little locomotive, if you notice there's a little shack, there's a little house, a concrete building, small. That was a Japanese police substation during the war, and

there's a little ravine, which has been filled now just south of that station at that building, and there's Japanese in there with machine guns. They were firing away, and this one guy in our group, he stands up and runs at it, and I said, "Oh, my God, he'll never make it." And he runs at it, and tosses a grenade, and they must've hit him with a hundred shells and he went down. He's bleeding in all directions, and they kept pumping in him. We all yelled at him, "Hit the deck." But he gave his life, he knew he was gonna die, and who cares.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** Where do men get such courage?

**GUY GABALDON:** [INDISCERNABLE] love of country, [INDISCERNABLE].

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** Yesterday, we were in the reviewing stands, and you came by, you were the grand marshal yesterday, and you saw the crowd respond. You're pretty much admired here, and of course, in the United States as well. This being part of the Commonwealth of the United States, but I think one of the moments that was so touching was watching those, your fellow Marines, and Army and Navy, and Airmen walking down the main drag of Garapan, and being cheered wildly, and the pride these guys had, and the guys that couldn't walk, and the buses and stuff. That was a tremendous moment, I think, in this whole commemorative observance, and to me, that was the essence of that moment. How did you feel about the commemoration and seeing these fellows come back? How did you feel about that?

**GUY GABALDON:** All that kept going through my mind is at last 50 years, at last, the 4,000 are getting the word of thanks. That kept going through my mind over and over again, at last.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** It's these 25-year and 50 years that become the benchmarks of observance. Do you know what happened here 25 years ago? Was there a 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary?

**GUY GABALDON:** No, I've only been here for 14 years –

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** Did you hear about anything that happened?

**GUY GABALDON:** No, but it's obvious that not much could've been done. There are no memorials, Dan. And so I say just total neglect, and I don't wanna name groups. I do want to, but I think it might embarrass you, and any way, there were many liberal, ultra-liberal Americans that came here and destroyed these people. And almost told them, hate the United States, maybe they didn't say it so many words, but they brought marijuana here, and taught the local people how to grow it and smoke it. And said, "Get up off your knees, the colonial United States, the imperialistic United States owes you food stamps and [INDISCERNABLE]." So consequently, a lot of damage was done, and the 4,000 were forgotten. You know, recently, I've been asked in the last six months or so, I've been asked to speak at several schools here regarding the war, regarding the Marines.

And I'm shocked at the lack of knowledge that these kids have regarding Saipan and the war in the Battle of Saipan. These are not only Saipanese, American kids are in these schools. We're all Americans, but the howlies [PH], and the questions they asked me after I give my talk, and show some films. I've got some good Navy footage, very gory stuff, and the kids will ask, "What nations were fighting here?" There's only the United States and Japan. And things like, "Is war enjoyable?" Kids asking this, and I can see where they get that where you see these shoot-them-up things on TV.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** Rambo-type films, right.

**GUY GABALDON:** Yeah, and –

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** But Guy, I can tell you from my experience at the USS Arizona Memorial, where we have over 2 million visitors a year that is not uncommon there. I've had people come up, and ask who won the war, so I think that –

**GUY GABALDON:** But we all know that Japan won the war.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** Well, maybe some of us do and some of us don't, but some of us don't even know who the combatants were, and I think that is a problem. And

part of what our challenge in the National Park Service here at American Memorial, a War in the Pacific or at the Arizona Memorial is to be a center for learning, so that both kids of the United States, and perhaps kids of Japan come there, and have an opportunity to hear our side of the story. And what you bring up has been brought up by many, many veterans because sometimes when they come to the memorial to say why are those brochures in Japanese? And they're offended, and we explain to them they're in Japanese, so that we can tell our side of the story, so that they can come away because most kids in Japanese schools, and even those that get American history lessons in American schools, don't have the background. They don't even know who [INDISCERNABLE], and it so deeply affects their lives.

**GUY GABALDON:** Yeah, but the memorials here though, Dan, I keep going back to 50 years of with recognition whatsoever. These people were in the war. The average American didn't see battle. These people saw it, although those that saw it are about my age, and so there are very few left, but even back then, for the past 50 years, no one –

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** So is what you're saying that what's important is that we don't lose this memory, and you feel that here in Saipan that memory's been lost of these 4,000 men and their contributions because it took so long to get the memorial built is that the essence of what we're talking about?

**GUY GABALDON:** Well, that would be sour grapes, that'll be kicking a dead horse.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** No, but I mean, the problem is you see it that this history is slipping away, and it took 50 years for that memorial to be built, and how much as been lost –

**GUY GABALDON:** Yeah, but here on out, it is gonna make that much difference, it's over, it's gone. But certainly, I feel bad about the past 50 years, and maybe that is kicking a dead horse, but you know, there's an inscription at Banzai Cliff, one of the latest memorials there, and quite large, a big rock like with a smooth face on it, take

a look at that. It's a Japanese memorial, and it says, "The brave soldiers died defending their country." That is a big fat lie. I feel like getting the satchel charge of dynamite and blowing that thing up. They were not defending their country here. This was not Japan. This was a stolen island.

And it makes them seem like heroes, like victims. The cruel Americans came here, and I've heard local people. One time this guy here, he was a congressman, and I write some pretty tough stuff that the newspapers would in the editorial page had print. They don't any more. They think I'm too radical, but as a consequence of things that I've written, one legislator came up to me, and says, "You know, we didn't invite you Marines here." I said, "Of course not, you weren't born when I came here." And I says, "As to inviting us here," I says, "the people here were [INDISCERNABLE]." I said, "You ought to get on your knees and say thanks to the Marines, to those that liberated Saipan." Do you know that on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July, when they have the celebration here, it's not the 4<sup>th</sup> of July as you and I know it, Independence Day, it's liberation from the American concentration camp. Where could we have put these people, Dan?

The Saiyaman government was paying for several years to bring a guy. He's a Ph.D. from Chicago, he's a Puerto Rican, Dr. Patanza [PH], I think his name is. He'd write the speeches for the 4<sup>th</sup> of July for these senators. It was the Speaker of the House one time, Fiteal [PH]. Let me tell you when I heard that. I heard it on the radio, as I was driving to the parade grounds, and I thought that was written in Moscow, as anti-American speech as I have ever heard. I believe I'm telling you things that you are not aware of, Dan.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** Maybe, and that's fine. The flavor of the speeches, however, yesterday by the governor and such were very supportive of –

**GUY GABALDON:** Beautiful, wonderful speeches. The one who gave one of the best speeches, he was standing up there, and he praised the Marines and the

liberation and all. I've got copies, and you'll see it in my book. I've got copies of his editorials where he said the cruel imperialist Americans came here, and put a gun to my father's head, and said you forced them to be Americans. And this goes on and on every week and every week.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** Do you think, though, maybe perhaps that –

**GUY GABALDON:** Why that 180 degree?

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** I don't know. Maybe I'm suggesting, maybe this is a new beginning for all of you.

**GUY GABALDON:** I hope so. You think they're born again? Could be.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** All of us grow and change.

**GUY GABALDON:** Could be, this particular guy, he's emcee there yesterday, very intelligent. This guy can do a tremendous amount of good, but he was hitting the U.S. week after week in his editorial, and I mean viciously. You'll read it in my book, and I quote verbatim.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** Well, let's talk a little bit about some of the things that have happened to your life. Of course, your exploits here have been recalled in film, Hell to Eternity, you've been honored to be on This is Your Life, of which we're gonna have a copy of this program shown after your interview. You've been on quiz shows, national quiz shows, and you'll never admit this, I know, because you're a very humble man, but you're an American hero. And your exploits have been an inspiration to many Americans, and I told you when I was a kid, I wanted always to meet this Guy Gabaldon, and here I am interviewing you here.

**GUY GABALDON:** That blonde, blue-eyed tall Marine.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** No, I just thought you were part of my cultural background, and identified strongly with that, and very proud of it.

**GUY GABALDON:** Thank you, Dan.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** And we had an opportunity yesterday to fly over to Tinian, and you and I stood there, and looked at one of those atomic bombs were assembled that changed the course of human history, not our history, human history, and it was a powerful place. It was very powerful, both Lieutenant Sheik [PH] and I were there. And you've been over there so many times –

**GUY GABALDON:** Major.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** Sheik.

**GUY GABALDON:** Major.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** Major, he was a lieutenant here that's right. I've demoted him. Major Sheik, and it was an experience, I mean that I'll never forget. Yesterday I spent it with two veterans, who 50 years ago, were on the beaches there, and trying to survive and trying to take this island.

**GUY GABALDON:** We need more Americans like you, Dan.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** Well, I'm not saying this for my own benefit.

**GUY GABALDON:** No, but I sense that you feel this Americanism spirit, and this is great, I mean this.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** I have a sense of history, and certainly a sense of American history, which I majored in college, and that yesterday was a real powerful moment. Today, of course –

**GUY GABALDON:** But you almost killed me there, you know.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** They're not gonna know what that is, but we had to start the plane, but good thing I had good instructions from you. We're looking back now in 50 years, and a part of an oral history is to record your thoughts. When you think of the Saipan campaign, and you're around it everyday is there anything that flash immediately to the forefront as kind of this is how I remember Saipan immediately. Is it going through those jungles and trying to get those guys?



**GUY GABALDON:** No, I don't know, maybe I'm just [INDISCERNABLE] say I don't wanna talk about it. I say I wanna talk about it. It's an experience you can't buy for millions of dollars. There's just no way, and it's interesting, and I like to talk about it. Often times, it's taken wrong as arrogance.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** Do you think that sometimes people misinterpret you?

**GUY GABALDON:** I think so. You know, when I first came back to Saipan 14 years old, I got off the plane here, and I can't describe to you what I felt in that I'm back where it took place. This is Saipan. I can't believe I'm back on Saipan. You know what, I'd come to somebody and say, "Hey, you know, I was here during the campaign," and people would look at me, and I'd say, "Aren't they interested?" Not in me, not in anything I may have done, but I'm back here. You know so and so Mr. Sablon [PH], Mr. Tinorio [PH] or whoever, and I'd describe them.

"You know, I know these people. I knew these people." And I'd get a blank stare, and no one cared. It took a while, and pretty soon I said, nobody wants to hear this, not hear what I may have accomplished, what I may have gone through, but just the fact that I was here, and it took a while. And I made enemies because of that, I was called arrogant, and that I claimed I won the war by myself. It was like a kid with a new toy, and this is what a lot of these guys felt yesterday. They came back; they had tears in their eyes. And a lot of people misinterpret this, if they don't have tears in their eyes.

I've heard guys yesterday and the day before, the last three or four days coming to people, and say, "Hey, I was here," and I remember 14 years back. That's sad. It was so sad for me. I've gotten over it, and I've gotten bitter, I guess, but then I was hit in the paper, and by different people, "This guy claims he won the war by himself. Oh, he's living in the past." And this is history, Saipan, and it was taken out of me. Now, I fly on my airplane, and I just lead my life and that's it.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** Well, I think that a lot of people look up to you, and I think you being chosen as grand marshal is reflective of a lot of people's attitudes.

**GUY GABALDON:** I'm grateful for that honor. I think that honor should've been given to others. There was a guy there with one arm, another guy there with one leg gone. I think they should've had that honor. I gave nothing. I enjoyed what I was doing. This is what I was trying to get over to you. I gave nothing. Why that honor? I lost nothing, I gave nothing, I absorbed. I got a lot out of this, you see.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** A lot of –

**GUY GABALDON:** I hadn't thought of that. I hadn't thought of that before. Now, that I mentioned this guy with one arm, they gave. Now, all of a sudden, I look back and I say, "What did I give?" I gave nothing.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** It isn't what you give, but maybe what you risked.

**GUY GABALDON:** What did I risk? I was laughing while I was running –

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** You're risking your life.

**GUY GABALDON:** You know, one night we went into Japanese territory, and the scouts are snipers. They were tops in the Marine Corps, everyone respects them. They're tough guys, and there was 19 in this one group. There's Sergeant Hoot Gibson [PH]. His name was Gibson. Every Gibson is Hoot automatically, so he came to our headquarters Regimental Intelligence, and he says, "Captain Schwabe," he says, "have you got a man I can take?" He says, "Anyone that understands Japanese?" He said, "We're going on patrol tonight into Japanese territory." And I say, "I'll go." Then Hurley [PH], this close buddy of mine, he said, "I'll go with you." So there's Lloyd Hurley and myself, and we meet this patrol down by the lines.

You know where the Seventh Adventist Clinic is that was our lines at the time, all the way across the island, and so it had big sandbags and all, you know machine gun in placements. So we line up there. The scouts and snipers, and then there was a corman, and then Hurley, and I took up the tail end. And it's getting late about, I

don't know, about 9:00 at night, and I reach over, and I say, "Hurley," I says, "find out what's happening. When are we leaving?" Hurley reached over, and tapped Sculley [PH}, the corman, and Sculley goes and reaches over, and no one's there. They were gone. See, they're so independent.

They work so closely, I guess they forgot that they had three other guys with them, and so they shoved off. They were in Japanese territory. I says, "Hurley," I says, "man, they're gonna call us chicken." I said, "Let's get down to the line. We'll go look for them." So we get down and there's a young lieutenant there, and I ask him where this patrol is, and he says, "They're gone. They're in Japanese territory." So I says, "We're gonna go look for them," and he says, "You're crazy. You can't do that nighttime going in Japanese territory." I'd been doing this right along, as an individual. So we jump over the barbed wire and all. We get way on in going towards Garapan, and that's a long ways off. We're in what they call the San Jose area. And so we go and go, and we don't find them.

So we're coming back, and coming close to the lines. There's a farmer's field. There's ferrules there, and we had a whistle. I'll never forget the password was whistle twice, and then you'd be challenged. So I whistle, and when I did, every machine gun in BAR and M1, every rifle and grenades all opened up on us, so we hit the deck. And we get in these ferrules that's the only thing that saved us. These guys are just spraying the whole area, and I say, "Oh, my God, man, we're dead. We're dead. I mean, we can't run back that way that's Japanese," and these are Americans shooting at us, our fellow Marines.

So we lay there and wait and wait, and then I whistle again, and they opened up, and Sculley started crying. I mean, that doesn't take away from this man's bravery. He says, "We've had it." I says, "Yeah," I says, "I'm gonna run." So I got up and I ran. To hell with the password, I just ran. I says, "Don't shoot, don't fire." And so they held their fire, and I jumped over the bags, and I says, "You bunch of bastards, what

are you doing?” And so I explain to them, and this lieutenant says, “The scouts and snipers are back already,” so they thought we were Japanese, you see. So I holler at Sculley and Hurley, and they come running, and jump over the barbed wire. They almost wiped out [INDISCERNABLE].

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** They were upset?

**GUY GABALDON:** Oh, were they upset. Sculley wasn’t crying any more.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** His temper was up a little.

**GUY GABALDON:** This is impossible. You can’t fire back, you see. But any way, we

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**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** Was that the closest you ever got to getting knocked off?

**GUY GABALDON:** Oh, I got shot twice. I was hit with frag one time. It’s a weird deal, Marpi Point, right near where the Banzai Cliffs are we had two prisoners sitting down. There was a bunch of Marines around, and I’m talking to these guys, and one Marine says, “Hey, Gabby, hit the deck.” A Japanese had come up from the cliffs, come on over the cliff, and he had this green shirt and green helmet. They weren’t all that shape and that color, and so I says, “[JAPANESE LANGUAGE]. Raise your hands.” And he raised his hands, and then he put his hand down. He had grenades on his belt. Puts one hand down, I says, “[JAPANESE LANGUAGE]” once more. He raised his hand, put his hand down, I shot. I let it go off 15 rounds, and he blew up. He blew in half -

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** From his hand grenades -

**GUY GABALDON:** Obviously, I hit a detonator. I mean, I can’t think of anything else. So these two guys here, they got up and started running towards the cliff, and I says, “[JAPANESE LANGUAGE]” I says, “Halt, stop, I don’t wanna kill you,” but they kept running. What I think is that they must’ve wondered what kind of bullets does this guy have blowing people in half, you see. And so I had to kill them just before they went over the cliff because once down the cliff, they’d come back killing

Marines. No, that wasn't close, as I've come. The closest I've come to getting killed by our side, yeah. Friendly fire they call it.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** Well, you must've encountered a lot of that. If you were going out there scouting, I mean, they don't know who you are out there.

**GUY GABALDON:** No, friendly fire, no. One night up in the hills it is my fault, I mean, that friendly fire. I was caught in this area of night, the sun had gone down, I figured well, I can't go back. It was pretty hot that night, the firing. So I got down in these rocks, and it just so happened, unbeknownst to me, that was a target area that night, and they started lobbing them in, and just all over. And if one had come right where I was sitting [INDISCERNABLE]. There was occasions of friendly fire, but in all the times that I brought Japanese back, usually, I'd bring them back in the day. I'd have my prisoners at night, and early the next morning, come back, and I'd have them waving T-shirts, and all the whole bit.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** And you'd trail behind them?

**GUY GABALDON:** Sometimes alongside, yeah. Alongside or behind.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** For your service here, you received what medals?

**GUY GABALDON:** I was recommended for the Congressional Medal of Honor, and the citation is in my book, and I ended up with the Navy Cross, which is the highest medal in the Navy.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** That's correct. Your last one took you back, literally out of the war, eventually back to a couple hospitals and then –

**GUY GABALDON:** I was really sad about that. I got shot in the hand, and shot in the ribs, and they were gonna cut my hand off. The bone was –

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** Is that scar from –

**GUY GABALDON:** Yeah, it's a machine gun wound. And what teed me off is that shot my watch off, and I've got the watch at home, the bullet went through the band. It was a Seikosha, a forerunner to the Seiko. I've got that in a case at home.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** Do you still have good use of that hand?

**GUY GABALDON:** Yeah, well, I don't have the motion I have in the other hand, but yeah, it's strong, it's all right. I still fight a little bit. I almost died that night because of the operation on my hand, and one guy picked me up and threw on his shoulders, and they'd gotten my watch and all. Ran down Mount Tapochau, and there was an Army field hospital. See, the Marines don't have hospitals, and you know where Skalasekas [PH] store is, Esko [PH] store that was a hospital there, field hospital. And they took me in there, and the bone was sticking out.

My hand had come back against my arm, and they had me on a table, and this one doctor had put a piece of cardboard between my face and my hand, so I couldn't see. I says, "You gonna cut it off?" And he says, "Just start counting," so I guess he hadn't decided yet. I says, "Well, tell me, you gonna cut it off?" And then I started counting, I went to sleep. I woke up the next morning, and I had a cast from here to here, and I could move [INDISCERNABLE], and I said, I still got my hand. And I'll never forget this Army nurse, Ms. Kennedy, beautiful young gal, and I says, "Hey, I've got my hand."

And she says, "You know, you almost died." She says, "You went down to your last heartbeat." And I says, "Loss of blood?" She says, "No, don't ever let anybody give you morphine." She says, "You're highly allergic to morphine." She says, "We almost killed you last night." She says, "You went right down. You scared us." So years later, I was in a hospital for another incident, and they gave me Demerol, and that damn near killed me, any way, as a consequence to that wound, I went down to the last heartbeat.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** I suspect, Guy, that we could go on for hours and hours, but I think maybe This is Your Life will give another perspective and such. And I just wanna thank you for sharing what has been almost an hour and a half –

**J-USS AZ\_OHC #354 Guy Gabaldon 06-16-94**

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**GUY GABALDON:** Well, thank you very, very much for having me here. I hope I've enlightened somebody or those here on the island as to what we really happened here.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** Well, I think that that's part of your mission, and I wish you well on that because –

**GUY GABALDON:** And let's never forget the 4,000.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** I don't think they'll ever be forgotten thanks to a lot of things that you've done. And you and your fellow commemorative people have done an outstanding job here, and I know that they're always on your minds because every time I've met you, you mention it, so on behalf of the National Parks Service, we just like to thank you for having this interview today.

**GUY GABALDON:** Thank you very much. Thank you, Dan.

**DANIEL MARTINEZ:** Wow, what an interview.

[END AUDIO]